



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Northeast Fisheries Observer Program Observers

FROM: David Potter
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SUBJECT: Revised Northeast Fisheries Observer Program Manual,
Biological Sampling Manual, and Cheatsheets

This memo is to notify observers of recent changes to the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program Manual, Biological Sampling Manual, and Cheatsheets. Changes made to each of these documents are explained below. Immediately replace both manuals and cheatsheets with the updated versions included in this packet. The start date for the revised logs is 01/01/08. Discard any previous versions of each log that has been updated and start using the revised logs provided in this packet **immediately**. If you are deployed on a trip and did not receive this until after 01/01/08, then please start using on your next scheduled trip. Not using the most updated manuals/cheatsheets/logs may result in a deduction of your bonus. See below for changes made to each manual and the cheatsheet.

Logs/Protocols in the Observer Program Manual that include major changes are the:

- Vessel & Trip Log
- Gillnet Gear Log
- Pot & Trap Gear Log
- Otter Trawl Gear Log
- Scallop Trawl Gear Log
- Twin Trawl Gear Log
- Otter Trawl Haul Log
- Pair Trawl and Mid-Water Trawl Gear Characteristics Log
- Pair Trawl and Mid-Water Trawl Haul Log
- Scallop Dredge Gear Log
- Scallop Dredge Haul Log
- Scallop Trawl Haul Log
- Incidental Take Log
- Catch Estimation Worksheet
- Marine Mammal, Sea Turtle, and Debris Sighting Log

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Vessel & Trip Log

- Program Code – 1 new program code was added to the Vessel & Trip Log protocols.
207 = Access Area Scallop, Delmarva
- Contract Area Code – 2 new contract area codes were added to the Vessel & Trip Log protocols.
101 = George's Bank Fixed Gear Sector
102 = George's Bank Cod Hook Sector

Gillnet Gear Log

- Percent Ratio of Type – Changed wording in protocols and in logs from *Percent Ratio of Type* to **Percent of Type**. The protocol did not change, however the field name did to minimize confusion. The recorded value should be recorded as the percent of buoyline type (sinking/neutrally buoyant to floating) used on the gear. Percentages were also added to the logs to remind observers that the recorded value should be recorded as a percent (*example: 75%/25%*).

Pot & Trap Gear Log

- Percent Ratio of Type – Changed wording in protocols and in logs from *Percent Ratio of Type* to **Percent of Type**. The protocol did not change, however the field name did to minimize confusion. The recorded value should be recorded as the percent of buoyline type (sinking/neutrally buoyant to floating) used on the gear. Percentages were also added to the logs to remind observers that the recorded value should be recorded as a percent (*example: 75%/25%*).

Otter Trawl Gear Log

- Kite Panel – added 4 more questions to each of these gear logs referring to the kite panel. They are:
 1. **KITE USED?:** Record whether a kite(s) is (are) used in this net by placing an "X" next to the appropriate code:
0 = No.
1 = Yes.
 2. **NUMBER:** Record the **total** number of panels used in a kite in this net.
 3. **WIDTH:** Record, in whole inches, the average width of the panels used in a kite in this net. This measurement will be taken along the edge of the panel which is parallel to the headrope.
 4. **LENGTH:** Record, in whole inches, the average length of the panels used in a kite in this net. This measurement will be taken along the edge of the panel which is perpendicular to the headrope.



Scallop Trawl Gear Log

- Kite Panel – added 4 more questions to each of these gear logs referring to the kite panel. They are:
 5. **KITE USED?:** *Record whether a kite(s) is (are) used in this net by placing an "X" next to the appropriate code:*
0 = No.
1 = Yes.
 6. **NUMBER:** *Record the **total** number of panels used in a kite in this net.*
 7. **WIDTH:** *Record, in whole inches, the average width of the panels used in a kite in this net. This measurement will be taken along the edge of the panel which is parallel to the headrope.*
 8. **LENGTH:** *Record, in whole inches, the average length of the panels used in a kite in this net. This measurement will be taken along the edge of the panel which is perpendicular to the headrope.*

Twin Trawl Gear Log

- Kite Panel – added 4 more questions to each of these gear logs referring to the kite panel. They are:
 9. **KITE USED?:** *Record whether a kite(s) is (are) used in this net by placing an "X" next to the appropriate code:*
0 = No.
1 = Yes.
 10. **NUMBER:** *Record the **total** number of panels used in a kite in this net.*
 11. **WIDTH:** *Record, in whole inches, the average width of the panels used in a kite in this net. This measurement will be taken along the edge of the panel which is parallel to the headrope.*
 12. **LENGTH:** *Record, in whole inches, the average length of the panels used in a kite in this net. This measurement will be taken along the edge of the panel which is perpendicular to the headrope.*

Otter Trawl Haul Log

- Pumping Information – 6 additional fields were added to the Otter Trawl Haul Log to capture details if pumping were to occur during a Bottom Otter Trawl trip. Note that these fields only need to be filled out if fish are pumped from the codend, otherwise they can be left blank. The new fields are:
 1. **BEGIN/END DATE:** *Record the month, day, and year, based on local time, that the fish pumping began and ended.*
 2. **BEGIN/END TIME:** *Record the local time, using the 24 hour clock (0000-2359), that the fish pumping began and ended, i.e., when the fish pump is attached to codend and is initially turned on (fish pump begin) and when the fish pump is turned off and fish are no longer coming out of the dewatering box (fish pump end).*



3. **CAPTAIN'S CATCH ESTIMATE:** *Record, in whole pounds, the Captain's catch estimate of the total catch prior to pumping the catch onboard. This value will aid in determining the time increments when obtaining a subsample.*
4. **CODEND?:** *Record whether the codend was visible at the completion of the pumping process by placing an "X" next to the appropriate code:*
 - 0 = No.
 - 1 = Yes.
5. **FISH PRESENT?:** *Record whether there were fish present in the net at the completion of the pumping process by placing an "X" next to the appropriate code:*
 - 0 = No.
 - 1 = Yes.
 - 2 = Could Not See.
6. **LOCATION OF CODEND:** *Record the location of the net when the remainder of the catch was emptied at the completion of the pumping process by placing an "X" next to the appropriate code:*
 - 1 = Off Stern.
 - 2 = Side of Vessel.
 - 3 = On Deck.

Pair Trawl and Mid-Water Trawl Gear Characteristics Log

- Title – Changed title of log FROM: *Pair Trawl and Mid-Water Trawl Gear Characteristics Log* TO: ***Pair and Single Mid-Water Trawl Gear Characteristics Log.***

Pair Trawl and Mid-Water Trawl Haul Log

- Title – Changed title of log FROM: *Pair Trawl and Mid-Water Trawl Haul Log* TO: ***Pair and Single Mid-Water Trawl Haul Log.***
- Begin Fishing – Begin fishing date and time added to this log. Definition reads as: *Record the local date (month, day, and year) and time, using the 24 hour clock (0000-2359), that the gear is fully deployed and actively fishing (this may be when the brakes are put on).*
- Gear Onboard – Gear onboard date and time added to this log. Definition reads as: *Record the local date (month, day, and year) and time, using the 24 hour clock (0000-2359), that the gear from this haul is completely out of the water.*

Scallop Dredge Gear Log

- Frame Height – a note was added to the Frame Height field in the protocols section of the Observer Program Manual. The note reads as: *If shoes (plates of steel welded to the bottom of the cutting bar) are used, do NOT include the thickness of the shoe in this measurement.*
- Chain Number – a note was added to the Number of Chains field in the protocols section of the Observer Program Manual that reads as: *If there are a different number of rock*



chains between each tickler chain, leave this field blank. Record the number of rock chains in the *COMMENTS* section.

- Configuration – a note was added to the Configuration field in the protocols section of the Observer Program Manual that reads as: *If no rock or tickler chains are used, record this as a "Standard" configuration.*
- Twine Top – 4 additional fields were added to the Scallop Dredge Gear Log that refers to the twine top. They are:
 1. **# MESHES WIDE:** *Record the number of meshes for the width of the twine top (runs from one side of the dredge frame to the other side of the dredge frame).*
 2. **# MESHES LONG:** *Record the number of meshes for the length of the twine top (runs from the dredge frame to the chain bag).*
 3. **HUNG:** *Record the hanging configuration of the twine top by placing an "X" next to the appropriate code:*
 - 0 = Unknown.
 - 1 = Diamond.
 - 2 = Square.
 - 8 = Combination, record the hanging Configuration in *COMMENTS*.
 4. **# RINGS:** *Record the number of rings that the twine top is hung from.*
- Number of Rows of Rings in Apron – a new field was added to this log. The definition of the field is: *Record the number of the rows of rings in the apron (start counting with the row of rings attached to the bottom of the twine top and stop counting with the row of rings attached to the clubstick).*

Scallop Dredge Haul Log

- Bottom Type – this field was removed from the log.
- Bottom Characterization – this field was removed from the log.
- Gear Condition Codes – 10 gear condition codes were either added or modified. They include:
 - 711 = *Hang-up, causing gear to be hauled back before scheduled time; minor damage.*
 - 712 = *Chains (rock, tickler, sweep) detached.*
 - 713 = *Twine top torn but was able to be repaired.*
 - 714 = *Twine top torn completely and had to be replaced.*
 - 715 = *One dredge fished on top of the other dredge (Rider on dredge).*
 - 716 = *Hydraulic issue (i.e., hose leak or blown, winch broken).*
 - 717 = *Obstruction in the gear, such as large amount of fixed gear, boulders, etc.*
 - 720 = *Chain bag broken, partially detached or lost.*
 - 730 = *Several rings destroyed.*
 - 740 = *Club stick caught in twine top, chains or chain bag. Club stick detached from chain bag.*

****SEE PARAGRAPH UNDER CHEATSHEETS FOR MORE DETAILS ON
UPDATED GEAR CONDITION CODES.****



- Number of Bushels Kept/Discarded and Average lb/Bushel Kept/Discarded – this field is now optional and are to be filled out at the discretion of the observer. Please note that if opted not to be filled out, subsampling methodology must be documented on the Catch Estimation Worksheet.
- Average lb/Bushel Kept/Discarded – if filled out, this field should now be rounded to the tenths (used to be a whole number).

Scallop Trawl Haul Log

- Bottom Type – this field was removed from the log.
- Bottom Characterization – this field was removed from the log.
- Number of Bushels Kept/Discarded and Average lb/Bushel Kept/Discarded – this field is now optional and are to be filled out at the discretion of the observer. Please note that if opted not to be filled out, subsampling methodology must be documented on the Catch Estimation Worksheet.
- Average lb/Bushel Kept/Discarded – if filled out, this field should now be rounded to the tenths (used to be a whole number).

Catch Estimation Worksheet

- Fishing Method – *Conveyor System* was added as an option. Refer to NEFOP memo 06-004 for details on how to sample when a conveyor system is used.
- Catch Estimation Method – *Cumulative Sum Method* was added as an option. Refer to NEFOP memo 06-004 for details on how to sample using the cumulative sum method.

Incidental Take Log

- Resuscitation definition. Resuscitation definition changed FROM: *The attempt to revive the sea turtle so that it has recovered sufficiently (e.g. actively moving on deck, reacts to stimuli, able to hold its head up) to be safely released. This attempt may, or may not be successful.* TO: ***A resuscitated turtle is any turtle that was comatose (i.e, no signs of life; unconscious; non-responsive) and later became active, possibly as a result of placing the turtle into a recovery position.*** If a turtle was successfully resuscitated by using the updated definition, use animal condition code 09 (alive, resuscitated (turtle)) rather than 01 (alive, see comments). Be sure to provide detailed comments on the incidental take log regarding the incident.
- Entanglement Situation Code – a new Entanglement Situation Code was added to encompass animals caught in the wings of a trawl net. New code reads as: *08 = caught in wings of trawl net.*
- Illustrations of various animal condition codes – 3 illustrations were added to the protocols section of the Incidental Take Log that describe 3 animal condition codes: 11 (dead, fresh), 12 (dead, moderately decomposed) and 13 (dead, severely decomposed).



Sighting Log

- Title – changed title of log FROM: *Marine Mammal, Sea Turtle and Debris Sighting Log* TO: ***Protected Species Sighting Log***.

Changes made to the Biological Sampling Manual include:

- Title – changed title FROM: *Lobster and Crab Pot Fisheries* TO: ***Lobster, Crab and Fish Pot Fisheries***.
- Hagfish added to Table 1e (Length Frequency and Age Structure Sampling Priorities for the Lobster, Crab and Fish Pot Fisheries).
- Hagfish added to Table 2 (Fish and Shellfish Sampling Requirements by Species per Statistical Area).
- Length Type of Atlantic Herring was changed from Natural Length to Fork Length.
- A note was added under the general instruction on how to fill out a Biological Sample Tag that reads as: *All protected species samples must be double bagged and double tagged.*
- Note number 3 under Resuscitation of the turtle was changed FROM: *Place turtle in the shade and keep moist.* TO: ***Protect from environmental conditions.***

Changes made to the Cheatsheets include:

- Gear condition codes for ALL fisheries have been changed. They were 2 digits but will now be recorded as 3 digits. For example, the gear condition code for *no gear damage* in the bottom otter trawl fishery used to be 01; however, it should now be recorded as 010.
- Net Names/Types/Builders – updated and added as a cheatsheet.
- Contact and Freezer list – updated.

Any questions regarding these changes should be directed towards KB McArdle (508) 495-2377 or Katherine.McArdle@noaa.gov.

Thank you.

